



Connecting Schools and Families in Colorado and New Mexico: Addressing Cultural Barriers to Promote Early Cognitive and Emotional Development

Issue

A child's entry into kindergarten and early elementary school are crucial transition years. The transition is made easier if children arrive at school ready to learn and confident in their abilities. Parents can play a critical role in preparing their children for the demands of the early school years. Although parent-school collaboration is strongly related to children's success in school, a variety of cultural and other barriers can impede the development of these important collaborative relationships. Unfortunately, there is a gap in knowledge about what works to create effective parent-school collaboration in diverse settings.

"When it comes to the education of our children... failure is not an option. We must work together to provide our young people with the knowledge and skills they need to be safe, self-confident, and successful."

President George W. Bush

Response

Researchers at Colorado State University are working with schools and parents in two culturally diverse communities in Colorado and New Mexico to promote learning and development by enhancing the relationship between schools and families. In these communities, parents and teachers will attend a series of learning and discussion sessions designed to address cultural barriers and promote critical components of learning such as communication, self-efficacy, self-responsibility, and decision-making.

The project has several important aims:

- Improve educational success;
- Reduce the potential for multiple problem behaviors;
- Enhance classroom and family management skills;
- Promote self-efficacy, self-management skills and the developmental level of the child; and
- Develop resiliency factors linked with reducing use of tobacco, abuse of alcohol and other drugs, and violence.

This project will provide important information about overcoming cultural barriers to building effective relationships between parents and schools. In addition, this project will provide useful information about the dissemination and translation of research results.

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More Information

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For more information about CDC's Community-based Participatory Prevention Research, please contact the Office of Public Health Research, CDC, 1600 Clifton Rd., MS D-72
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